



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS AND TRADEMARKS
Washington, D.C. 20231
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/332,103	06/14/1999	KENTARO YANO	8622868	2516

5514 7590 09/25/2002

FITZPATRICK CELLA HARPER & SCINTO
30 ROCKEFELLER PLAZA
NEW YORK, NY 10112

EXAMINER

LAROSE, COLIN M

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
----------	--------------

2623

DATE MAILED: 09/25/2002

7

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/332,103

Applicant(s)

YANO ET AL.

Examiner

Colin M. LaRose

Art Unit

2623

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 22 July 2002.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-10 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-10 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Arguments and Amendments

1. Applicants' arguments and/or amendments filed 22 July 2002, have been entered and made of record.

Response to Amendments and Arguments

2. Applicant has amended claims 1, 2, and 7 to include the limitations of the first and second quantization steps performing quantization by conducting error correction and without conducting error correction, respectively.
3. Applicant's arguments with respect to the newly added limitations of claims 1, 2, and 7 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. Claims 1-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Matsumoto in view of U.S. Patent 5,142,374 by Tajika et al. ("Tajika").

Regarding claims 1-3 and 7, Matsumoto discloses an inkjet printer as a recording apparatus (figure 1) that records image data in a plurality of gradations, comprising the steps of inputting multi-value level image data (element 16, figure 2), quantization means (element 17, figure 3) for quantizing (figure 5) the image data for a first

Art Unit: 2623

and second recording means (element 19, figure 3), and recording the image data with three or more levels in a plurality of gradations.

Referring to figures 5-1 and 5-2, eight-bit image data, corresponding to 256 unique image levels, is quantized into 68 output levels. Each of the 68 levels encompasses two recording means, thick ink dots and thin ink dots, which record in combination to form 68 output gradations (column 4, lines 66-68).

Matsumoto is silent to the first and second quantization steps performing quantization by conducting error correction and without conducting error correction, respectively.

Tajika discloses an image recording apparatus that binarizes image data of light and dark ink by two different processes for the purposes of recording. In particular, Tajika teaches binarizing light ink by a density pattern method (element 43, figure 4), corresponding to a dithering process, and an error diffusion method (element 44, figure 4). The density pattern method is not an error-correction process; the error diffusion is an error-correcting process.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify Matsumoto by Tajika to achieve the claimed since Tajika discloses that dithering the light ink and error-diffusing the dark ink are techniques to reduce granularity (column 1, lines 61-65), in accordance with Applicant's stated purpose in line 9, page 7 of Paper Number 6.

Regarding claim 4, the first and second recording means record the image with light and black ink (element 19, figure 3). The thin concentration ink dots are thinner and thus lighter than the thick concentration ink dots, which are darker (column 3, lines 19-20).

Regarding claims 5 and 6, thin and thick ink droplets are recorded in a plurality of gradations and in combination within a region (figure 5 and column 4, lines 66-68).

Art Unit: 2623

Regarding claims 8-10, Tajika teaches that quantization is performed by using an error diffusion method and a dither method ("density pattern method").

Conclusion

6. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Colin M. LaRose whose telephone number is (703) 306-3489. The examiner can normally be reached Monday through Thursday from 8:00 to 5:30. The examiner can also be reached on alternate Fridays.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Amelia Au, can be reached on (703) 308-6604. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 872-9314.

Art Unit: 2623

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the TC 2600 Customer Service Office whose telephone number is (703) 306-0377.

CML

Group Art Unit 2623

9 September 2002



JOSEPH MANCUSO
PRIMARY EXAMINER